

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-47 are in the case.

I. ELECTION/RESTRICTION

In response to the restriction requirement, Group I is elected. This election is made with traverse.

Applicants disagree that the claims do not relate to a single inventive general concept. The single general inventive concept to which the claims relate is the mitigation of problems caused by the exposure of alkenyl carboxylate catalysts to alkene, optionally in the presence of a carboxylic acid, at low (or zero) levels of oxygen. Claim 1 provides for reducing the alkene and/or temperature to mitigate the problems of benzene formation and/or catalyst inhibition. Claim 15 is a more specific case when there is a substantial absence of oxygen, in which catalyst inhibition can potentially become even more of an issue, and in which the period of contact is maintained below that at which significant inhibition of the catalyst occurs.

Based on the above, it is believed that all of the pending claims should be examined in this case. Withdrawal of the restriction requirement is respectfully requested.

II. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The claims have been amended to present preferred features in separate dependent claims, and to improve the form of the claims. Basis for the amendments to

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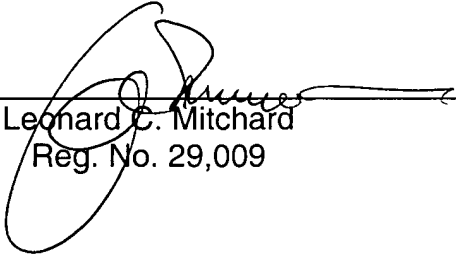
claims 1 and 15 appear at page 1, line 19 to page 2, line 2 of the originally filed application. No new matter is entered.

Favorable action is awaited.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____


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